



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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June 18, 1970

**California Board Releases
Crisis Study Report Text**

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--The full text of the "Crisis Study Report," an extensive study of current social problems prepared by the staff of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, has been released to the public.

Public distribution of the study had previously been forbidden by action of the convention's Executive Board, which passed on April 28 a motion to refer the study to its total program committee.

The committee, which was given the authority to release the report at its own discretion, voted here in June to make the text of the report, along with the forward and resolution adopted by the Executive Board, available on request for reproduction costs (probably \$3.50).

The committee also announced that it is doing further study before referring the report back to the staff with observations and comment, "with the understanding that the staff will resubmit the Crisis Study Report to the Executive Board."

The report, which stresses how California Southern Baptists can deal with national crisis issues such as racism, poverty, justice, violence, etc., was prepared by the staff at the request of action by the state convention in annual session.

Though the staff prepared report contained no specific recommendations for state convention programs to meet the issues, it outlined some possible suggestions as the basis for later recommendations to be drafted.

When the Executive Board considered it in April, at least one board member called the report "pure socialism." The motion to refer it to the committee and to forbid release of the report at that time passed with only two dissenting votes.

After the committee cites its observations and comments on specific sessions in the report, probably in September, it is expected that the staff will resubmit the report to the committee and then to the full Executive Board.

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**SBC President Asks Nixon
To Urge Spiritual Awakening**

6/18/70

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--The newly-elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention has written to President Richard M. Nixon urging him to proclaim July 18-19 as "special days of prayer for spiritual awakening in our nation."

Carl E. Bates, president of the SBC and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charlotte, wrote the letter in compliance with a resolution adopted by the SBC meeting in Denver on June 4.

Bates also issued a statement requesting Southern Baptist churches in all 50 states to observe a 24-hour period of prayer beginning at midnight, July 18, and closing at midnight, July 19.

His statement encouraged the churches "to remain open for prayer in the interest of a spiritual awakening in our nation."

On the same dates, the Baptist World Alliance will be holding its 12th World Congress in Tokyo, and a Southern Baptist evangelist, Arthur Blessitt, will be holding a mass rally in Washington, D.C., as the climax to his march from Los Angeles to Washington, pulling a 10-foot cross as he walks.

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Pennsylvania, Jersey Baptists
Elect State Executive Secretary

PITTSBURG, Pa. (BP)--Anticipating the formation of a state convention in October, Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey Southern Baptists have elected an executive secretary to work full-time in paving the way to state convention status in January, 1971.

The new executive secretary is Joseph Waltz, superintendent of missions for the Greater Pittsburg Baptist Association.

Waltz, an appointee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, will assume the new post Aug. 1, to make preparations for organization of the convention in October.

A native of Indiana, Waltz came to Pennsylvania in 1959 as pastor of the Pittsburg Baptist Church on Pioneer Drive. It was the first Southern Baptist congregation in the Pittsburg area. Later he became director of the mission program for the entire area.

He was pastor of Baptist churches in Kentucky, and led the First Baptist Church in Fairborne, Ohio, as pastor before going to Pittsburg.

Currently, Baptist churches in middle and eastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey are affiliated with the Baptist Convention of Maryland, while churches in western Pennsylvania are affiliated with the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

Western Pennsylvania, where Waltz serves, includes an area stretching to the Great Lakes area. During the past 11 years, Southern Baptists have established 19 churches and 10 chapels in the western Pennsylvania area.

When the new state convention of Southern Baptists in Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey is established, offices will probably be set up in the Harrisburg, Pa., area. A committee is currently seeking office space in that area.

In presenting the recommendation of the committee assigned to secure an executive secretary for the proposed new convention, chairman Larry Lewis, pastor in Philadelphia, cited Waltz' long experience and dedication to missions in the Pennsylvania area.

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South Carolina Church Votes
To Accept Non-Immersed Members

6/18/70

GREENWOOD, S.C. (BP)--First Baptist Church of Greenwood, S.C. has voted to accept members transferring from other churches without the usual Baptist requirement of baptism by immersion.

The moderator of the Abbeville Baptist Association here promptly called a meeting of the association's Executive Committee to hear a report on what the church had done.

Wade T. Burton of Greenwood, the association's moderator, said that he plans to appoint a committee of six to study the church's baptism practices and bring a report within two months "so that if the church's relationship with the association will be affected, we can settle it or at least be aware of it before the fall meeting" of the association.

In taking the action to admit members by transfer of letter without previous immersion, the 1,800-member church adopted a statement pointing out that the Baptist position on baptism by immersion will be carefully explained and recommended to all such candidates for membership.

The church voted, however, to receive candidates "by the transfer of their membership provided they have been baptized in some form and have publicly professed their faith.

"We would immerse those who, after study of the meaning of baptism, request it," said the church-adopted statement.

The church will continue to baptize by immersion all who seek to join the congregation on profession of their faith.

James A. Bowers, pastor of the church, said the congregation adopted the statement after long and careful study.

He said he initiated the idea following a number of years of "prayerful consideration of its possible implications."

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The pastor added he is a firm believer in the Baptist position on baptism by immersion, and would require all new converts to be baptized by immersion, and urge all persons transferring membership to the church who have not been immersed previously to follow the scriptural practice of baptism by immersion.

He added, however, that he believes some people would be offended by what they would regard as a challenge to a genuine Christian experience of baptism if told that immersion were the only way.

"We could become so dogmatic as to be a stumbling block rather than a help," Bowers said.

The statement adopted by the church pointed out that the members believe that a personal relation to God and the individual's dedication to Christ "are far more important than the means by which this commitment is symbolized (by baptism)."

The Greenwood church is believed to be the first congregation affiliated with the South Carolina Baptist Convention to vote to accept members who have not been immersed.

The practice, however, is not uncommon in several other states, including Virginia, North Carolina and others. Controversies have raged in North Carolina, Arkansas, Texas and California over the practice of either accepting the immersion of a denomination other than Baptist, or accepting members who have not been immersed.

Several Baptist associations in Arkansas and North Carolina have withdrawn fellowship from churches that practice "alien immersion," or "open communion." Most state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention, however, have no requirement that affiliated churches baptize or re-baptize all members by immersion.

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Judson College Names
McCrummen President

6/18/70

PRARION, Ala. (BP)--N. H. McCrummen, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dalton, Ga., and former Alabama pastor, has been elected president of Judson College, a Baptist college for women here.

His election came at the annual spring meeting of the school's board of trustees. Judson, one of three colleges owned by the Alabama Baptist State Convention, is the only senior liberal arts college for women in Alabama.

The new president, former pastor of the Woodlawn Baptist Church in Birmingham, was introduced to the faculty and staff at a joint luncheon with the trustees.

The student body greeted the news of McCrummen's election with a standing ovation.

Judge Fleetwood Carnley of Elba, Ala., chairman of the trustees and acting president since the resignation of James H. Edmondson last September, described McCrummen as "admirably qualified," and "a man who has real concern for emphasis on Christian values in education."

A former major in the U.S. Air Force, McCrummen was pastor of Baptist churches in Selma and Atmore, Ala., before serving the Birmingham church. For the past 10 years, he has been a columnist for The Alabama Baptist.

He also is a former president of the Alabama Baptist Pastors' Conference and former president of the Ministers' Association of Greater Birmingham.

He is immediate past president of the board of trustees at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

A cum laude graduate of Mercer University, Macon, Ga., he also has degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and Samford University, Birmingham.

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